

Scope of Study

HOMELAND SECURITY IN CONNECTICUT

Government efforts that focus on domestic threats have come to be known as homeland security. The need for greater homeland security became critical in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. While the federal government took actions such as establishing a Department of Homeland Security, passing new anti-terror laws, and providing grants, state and local level governments turned to the task of identifying potential terrorist targets in their jurisdictions and acquiring equipment and training for emergency responders.

The federal government defines homeland security as “a concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the U.S., reduce America’s vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur.” Part of the challenge for the various agencies involved has been defining roles, clearing bureaucratic obstacles, and identifying best practices. Close cooperation, information sharing, and joint planning among the three levels of government underlie these endeavors.

In Connecticut, the Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) was established in January 2005 from a combination of the Office of Emergency Management (from the Military Department) and the Division of Homeland Security (from the Department of Public Safety). DEMHS is responsible for developing, administering, and coordinating a comprehensive emergency management and homeland security program. It currently has 80 full-time employees, but it also works cooperatively with local, state, and federal agencies to carry out the mission of the department. The department’s FY 07 appropriation is \$71 million, over 80 percent of which is from federal funds.

AREA OF FOCUS

The study will examine the status of the state’s homeland security and related emergency management efforts. Specifically, it will focus on recent assessment, planning, and implementation activities related to improving the state’s ability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks.

AREAS OF ANALYSIS

- 1) Identify state and federal homeland security mandates and strategies related to preventing, protecting against, preparing for, and responding to terrorist attacks.
- 2) Review the steps taken to strengthen homeland security and preparedness in Connecticut since 2001, including:
 - a) Development of a threat and vulnerability assessment process
 - b) Establishment and prioritization of goals, objectives, and benchmarks to diminish threats and enhance preparedness, including those related to:
 - intelligence/information sharing;

- protection of infrastructure;
 - compatible communication systems;
 - detection of terrorist devices;
 - response and recovery plans;
 - training and equipping of emergency responders; and
 - public participation and education.
- c) Assessment of the extent to which goals, objectives, and benchmarks have been met
- 3) Examine Connecticut's organization and governance structure for homeland security, including a description of national, state, local, and private sector roles, and how homeland security efforts are coordinated
- 4) Describe and evaluate resources dedicated to homeland security functions, including:
- a) which state and local agencies receive state and federal funding for homeland security;
 - b) whether funding priorities are aligned with the state's homeland security strategy and goals;
 - c) how state and federal funds are allocated among Connecticut municipalities, regional entities, and others; and
 - d) what mechanisms exist to ensure funds are spent appropriately.
- 5) To the extent possible, compare Connecticut's efforts to other states' homeland security activities and initiatives

AREAS NOT INCLUDED IN SCOPE

The study will not independently evaluate how well individual state or other government agencies are prepared to perform their assigned responsibilities in the event of an incident, but it will examine the extent to which DEMHS monitors their preparedness to do so. In addition, the study will not re-examine preparedness for public health emergencies, which was the primary focus of a 2004 committee study. However, an update on the status of public health preparedness activities will be provided.